



County of Roanoke

ORIGINAL

DANIEL R. O'DONNELL
ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

November 12, 2003

Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW, Room 1W-A-325
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Ex Parte Notice W1 Docket No. 02-55
Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band

Dear Secretary Dortch,

Roanoke County has recently become aware of the proposal by a group called the Consensus group, led by Nextel, to alter the distribution of bandwidth in the 800 MHz band to minimize interference. While our discussions with our public safety agencies and communications vendors tell us that there is a real interference issue, we in Roanoke County are concerned that major changes to the frequencies available for public safety may not be in our immediate best interest.

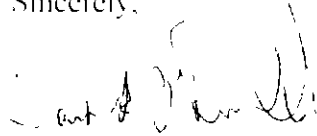
Our own 800 MHz emergency radio system is relatively free of interference. If we were forced to move to other frequencies, this would most likely cause major disruption for our public safety agencies and substantial cost for our taxpayers. Although we understand that the Consensus plan provides for funding from Nextel to help public safety agencies move to other frequencies, we are unsure whether the proposed 850 million dollars is sufficient to pay for all of the public safety work that will need to be done nationwide and how this funding would be prioritized. Furthermore, we are looking at our long range needs to upgrade our own radio system from analog to digital and the timeframes most likely involved in changing frequencies may interfere with our ability to effectively plan for this upgrade.

On the other hand, we recognize that the interference issues are real and are causing problems for public safety in other areas. Therefore we feel there does need to be a solution found to deal with the problem. Due to the complexity of this issue we feel local governments need more time to properly research the pros and cons of the

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alternatives. Therefore Roanoke County's recommendation on this issue is to ask the FCC to delay a decision for at least six months to allow more time for local government public safety agencies to gather more information and render sufficiently educated opinions on the proposals to deal with the interference issue

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel R. O'Donnell", written over a horizontal line.

Daniel R. O'Donnell
Assistant County Administrator

CC Elmer C. Hodge, Roanoke County Administrator
Darlene Burcham, Roanoke City Manager
Terry L. Hall, General Manager of Community Affairs, AEP